



Indian
Summer
Recycling

House Bill 5334 is a bad idea.

It will destroy my business. It will destroy the compost industry and it will fill our landfills with material that doesn't belong there.

More importantly it will hinder the development of the industries that we are counting on to take us into the 21st century.

Initially the proponents of this Bill said it was really just a test. That maybe three landfills in Michigan would qualify to accept yard waste. The truth is that fully 36 of the 50 landfills in Michigan already collect their gas. These facilities are in a position to quickly comply with 5334.

Last week the proponents of this bill tried to infer that this bill was necessary for the continued production of electricity from landfill gas. This is just not true. Granger started its program after the yard waste ban went into effect, and has continued it for over ten years with the ban in effect. This bill is not about whether there will be electricity from land fill gas, but the small marginal increase in that power.

Last week proponents talked about powering 300,000 homes if all the landfills in the state joined the program, and if all the landfills were allowed to take yard waste. What they didn't say was that 280,000 homes would be served without the addition of yard waste.



No one has talked about the separate collection of yard waste. But, it is the issue. Once a facility in an area can accept commingled material the need for a separate collection is gone. Sooner rather than later all the hauler's will default to the easiest collection system and all the grass will go to the landfills that can take it commingled. Without the grass (nitrogen) to balance the leaves (carbon) you can not make compost. Without the 10 month revenue stream you can not operate a facility.

Indian Summer and the other compost facilities will close.

I will terminate my employees, and I have hired two more people full time this quarter.

The waste haulers will consolidate their routes and will let go many of the drivers and loaders who are now employed collecting yard waste. (there are 40 per day at my site alone.)

The manufactuors, sales people and mechanics who service our industry will no longer have the compost industry as customers. By the way I purchased \$1,000,000 worth of equipment in the last two years.

The residents of this State have embraced the concept of recycling. They have learned to separate their yard waste. They have suffered through the transition from plastic to paper bags, and they are beginning to embrace the final product. In the municipal communities I serve in south east Michigan they have diverted 20% of their total waste through compost programs, and are reusing 30,000 cubic yards a year of the finished product. The citizens of this State have demonstrated time and again that they do



not want this material in the landfill. They are not going to be happy when they find out that its all going back.

It was the landfill siting wars of the 1980's that led to the State's policy of reduce, reuse and recycle. The yard waste ban has reduced the amount of material going to landfills by 20%. This means the hills are 20% smaller than they would have been and the life of a landfill is 20% longer. The state's policy worked. Today instead of there being a landfill shortage there is an abundance of space.

The truth be known this bill isn't about electricity its about tipping fees. With this recession land filled material is down 20% from a year ago. Electricity might be .11 cent a kilowatt an hour but yard waste is \$18.00 per ton. Its one thing to help out an industry that's in trouble but its another to do it at the expense of a second industry.

My real concern is the unintended consequences of this act. In 1990 the State faced with a crisis in landfill space and adopted a policy to encourage recycling. As part of the solution they banned yard waste from landfills. It was this policy that encouraged investment. It was this policy that caused the compost industry to develop. It was this policy that served the State for the last 20 years.

Today the State is trying to develop the industries to take us into the 21st century. Stem cell research, the film industry, wind and solar power. Those people are watching this bill. They are at first optimist who willingly take risks but they are careful to reduce there risks where they can. They will know that if the State can cut



the legs out from under the compost industry, they can do the same to them. It will affect there decision on the investment of time and money in the State.

It is the assurance that if the State adopts a policy and encourages investment that the State will stand behind that policy until there is a very good reason to abandon it. The little bit of extra electricity that this bill would produce is not a good enough reason to abandon its 20 year policy if it hopes to attract new investors to further new policies.

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